

# • New Ideas and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **FLY-OR-DRIVE VEHICLE** without wings, powered with one turbine-jet engine for lift and thrust and a smaller one of same type for wheel-drive, is being studied by a British aircraft constructor. Designed to be gyro-stabilized so a competent motorist could handle it, the vehicle is part of an investigation into the future of dual purpose lift/thrust engines. There are no plans for its immediate manufacture.

• Science News Letter, 79:256 April 22, 1961

⚙️ **PERSONAL BRANDING IRON** of satin finished solid bronze head with Gothic letters insures the return of borrowed garden tools, athletic equipment or other items. It is available in choice of any three letters.

• Science News Letter, 79:256 April 22, 1961

⚙️ **VACUUM CLEANER TOOL**, with an adapter to fit all standard vacuum hoses, consists of an especially designed brush and small diameter plastic tubing. It will safely and thoroughly clean art objects, hobby models, picture frames, figurines, and anything not reached by ordinary vacuum tools.

• Science News Letter, 79:256 April 22, 1961

⚙️ **GEIGER COUNTER KIT**, shown in the photograph, for "do-it-yourself" young scientists provides materials to construct a



Geiger counter and perform experiments in radioactivity. Powered by standard batteries, the assembled Geiger counter is housed in a transparent plastic bubble mounted on a wooden base. The experiment manual contains complete instructions.

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⚙️ **STYLISH SUNGLASSES** have lenses made to same specifications as regular

glasses to protect from glare and give visual comfort. Graceful frames feature hand-engraved patterns and delicate color combinations.

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⚙️ **SIDE ARM SCREW DRIVER** has T-handle that converts regular screw driver into high torque driver, providing a turning force previously unattainable in non-power tools. Driver comes complete with two interchangeable blades: regular blade and No. 2 point Phillips blade.

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⚙️ **TOOL WRAP PAPER** protects metal surfaces against rust without having either to oil or grease them. Patented chemical provides a rust-preventive vapor that remains effective over long periods. Each box contains 45 feet of paper 18 inches wide.

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⚙️ **TRAVEL CLOCK-RADIO** has a six-transistor superheterodyne circuit powered by three penlight batteries, and a 24-hour alarm clock that may be set to turn a buzzer alarm or the radio on and off automatically. Fourth battery operates a built-in night light. The set includes a plug-in earphone for private listening.

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## Nature Ramblings



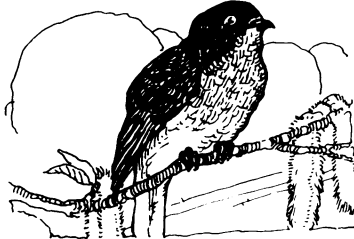
## Do You Know?

➤ THE BLUEBIRD is second only to the robin in popular affection and familiar recognition. As a matter of fact, he is known in some sections as "blue robin" and "blue redbreast." Like the robin, the bluebird is a thrush; the two of them belong to the minstrels' aristocracy of the feathered world.

The bluebird's return from his southern sojourn is a little later than the robin's; but he will return, sometimes fighting northward obstinately against the chill and stormy weather. There can hardly be a neighborhood in the northern part of our country that has not by now had its wave of bluebird migration.

The bluebird shares with the robin a willingness to be good neighbors with human beings. Indeed, he is a little easier to induce to accept a place as a tenant. Because of his fondness for nesting in natural hollows, such as decayed stumps of limbs, he takes readily to bird-boxes. And he is a very useful tenant, earning his keep by ravaging the insect population, and making little or no trouble as a fruit thief. In this he has rather the better of his cousin, the robin.

### Bluebirds



Throughout the United States, there are three different kinds of bluebirds.

The common or eastern bluebird, with its blue back and red breast, sings its simple "chur-wi" from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes.

The western or Mexican bluebird, which ranges along the Pacific Coast, has the red breast of the eastern species but is a darker, purplish blue and has a chestnut band on its back.

But high up in the mountains of the western United States is the bluest bird of them all. This is the mountain bluebird with both blue back and breast, and not a single red feather.

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Powdered *alumina*, or aluminum oxide, is used in making refractory bricks and cements, spark plugs, insulators, and porcelain and glass mixes.

*Brucellosis*, a serious livestock disease that also affects humans, has been completely eradicated from New Hampshire and in 22 counties in six other states.

The mean *sea level* has risen appreciably throughout most of the world during the last century.

A solar furnace on the moon has been suggested to provide water, oxygen, nitrogen, food and power for future United States *astronauts*.

Flowers, trees and other vegetation are important aids in *prospecting* for ores and minerals used by the steel industry.

There are about 300,000 *plant* species growing throughout the world, yet only 3,000 have been tried for food use.

A modern electronic *brain* can multiply numbers as large as one billion at a rate of more than 400 per second.

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